



HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND APPROPRIATION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL AND SOCIAL SPACE OF THE CEU BUTANTÃ IN THE CITY OF SÃO PAULO - REPORTS OF A RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Description of the research project on the appropriation, by educators, of the architectural and social complex of the Centro Educacional Unificado (CEU) Butantã, started in 2018, entitled "Dealing with spaces I", from the perspective of the researchers. This educational equipment composes the public policy of education in the city of São Paulo, Brazil. The research had the assumption that a quality education is characterized by the commitment to the social and democratic environment, and tends to provide pedagogical conditions so that learners can appropriate new experiences and reflect on how to place themselves in the world, conquer it and transform it. This proposal values students and educators as producers of knowledge. We used the method of systematic and unsystematic participant observation, interpreted based on the concept of appropriation highlighted by Vygotsky, Leontiev, Milton Santos, and Freire.

KEYWORDS: Narrative Map, Democracy, Citizen Education, Childhood and Adolescence, Appropriation, Educator.

INTRODUCTION:

This is a report of the researchers' perceptions about the course of the research project "Dealing with new spaces: children and adolescents in the appropriation of the architectural complex of the CEU Butantã (São Paulo, Brazil)", which seeks in this text to interrogate the practices of an innovative public policy in Education, to present and discuss the multiple conceptions of a liberating or social pedagogy. Finally, it aims to capture elements of a democratic education.

The characteristics of the Centros de Educacional Unificados - Unified Education Centers (CEUs) are aimed at strengthening public schools and, by extension, empowering the community. In this sense, they aim to change the logic of public policies that have always prioritized central regions. The CEU policy values the most distant areas, where the population living on the margins of the goods produced by the city lives, that is, the peripheral areas and the poverty pockets. That is why the choices of these equipments take into account the social exclusion map of the city of São Paulo.

In this sense, the CEU is a popular education project that has become a public policy of intersectorial and interdisciplinary nature, since it covers several areas, such as environment, employment, popular participation, local development, health, culture, sports and leisure. Its guiding conception of education goes beyond the school space and the perspective of a school pedagogy. At the CEU, school education meets social education, which constitutes a pedagogy that takes into consideration the yearnings of the lower classes, the perspectives of art, culture, and other knowledge, as well as the concerns of the city and the community. We call this social pedagogy.

In our opinion, the CEU project has not left aside or excluded previous experiences, such as the Escola Parque by Anísio Teixeira, the Centros Integrados de Educação Pública (CIEPs) by Darcy Ribeiro, the Ginásio Vocacional by educator Maria Nilde Mascellani. It reconfigured these perspectives in order to respond to the concerns of this moment (cf. PADILHA e SILVA, 2004). The CEU, idealized and implemented by the Secretaria Municipal de Educação of São Paulo in the period 2001-2004, offers "to the disadvantaged classes as much

as is available and possible for a town hall" (PEREZ, 2010).

The architectural complex of the CEU Butantã follows an integration logistics consisting of multiple communicative vessels between the educational units, the community and the cultural and sports units. Lately, the management has installed several grids that altered the original project and created some barriers between the communicative channels of the architectural complex. In our view, this fact interferes with the proposal of interdisciplinarity and intersectoriality.

During the research, we observed a proposal and a practice of integral development of the students, from babies to adults, and of the educators; the Center is a space of development of the community and of the surroundings, of innovative democratic experiences; it is focused on the promotion of children and youth protagonism; finally, it takes care of the professional development of the educators and managers.

METHODOLOGY:

The CEU Butantã, which we chose as research locus, has three school units that serve people from 0 to 14 years old, and with equipment for community use, swimming pools, sports courts, skateboarding track, amphitheater, workshops, library, socializing area, bakery and telecenter. The research followed the path of academic internationalization (Brazil and Germany), aiming to understand the integral education carried out in a CEU architectural and social complex. The research assumed that the architectural space, together with the political-pedagogical project, holds a language that can facilitate the appropriation and socialization processes of the subjects involved.

The research used the method of systematic and unsystematic participant observation, which allowed us to analyze the daily life and the process of occupation and appropriation of spaces by students and educators of the three educational units and the cultural and sports equipment. It broadened the possibilities for meaningful research and, at the same time, contributed to the transformation of the space and the subjects involved. The data analysis was reflected on the theoretical contributions of Vygotsky, Leontiev, Gadotti, Freire, Ribeiro, Teixeira,

Boal, Santos, Arroyo, and Brandão, chosen with the purpose of capturing the concepts of appropriation, territory, art, integral education, social education, popular education, city, community, and multiple languages

From conception to the present, the research has gone through stages of understanding, problematization, appropriation, mobilization, linkage, training, and awareness. First, the team was organized and the researchers' training process was carried out through colloquiums, courses and seminars, for theoretical and methodological alignment. This was followed by the elaboration of the research project, the visits to the Educational Units, partnership negotiations, the officialization of the research exchange between researchers from the German and Brazilian Universities and with the Secretária Municipal of the city of São Paulo, and the approval of the ethics committee.

In the comings and goings, a dialogical and participatory process was unleashed among the subjects and institutions involved. There was monitoring of the activities in the units, closer contact with educators, managers, and students, teacher training, international virtual seminars to present the results, academic production, and the development of new research.

The preliminary research procedures included the establishment of partnerships and sensitization to adhere to the proposal, which was accepted by the Municipal Education Secretary of São Paulo, by the management body and by 28 educators of the CEU Butantã. After this step, the researchers were divided into subgroups per school unit: Centro Centro Educação Infantil (CEI)- Early Childhood Education, Escola Municipal de Educação infantil (EMEI) - Municipal School of Early Childhood Education and Escola Municipal Ensino Fundamental (EMEF)- and Municipal Elementary School. Each research group, when confronted with daily practices and the educator-student, student-student, and educator-educator relationship, developed a rhythm and research techniques.

DISCUSSION:

The CEI serves children from 0 to 3 years and 11 months. There, through participant observation, the researchers were able to capture appropriation experiences "[...] transformative, that increase the possibilities of broadening the reading of the world and its meanings" (researcher). The narrative map used to unveil the praxis required the researchers' ability and the educators' collaboration to capture and interpret the children's appropriation, in an exercise that required care with intersubjective aspects. At CEI, it was noticeable the valorization of "[...] spatial expressions that unfold from it, such as landscape, territory, place [...]" (researcher). In this sense, the work was gradually unfolding into initial cartographies, as the educators themselves were appropriating the research technique, as reported: "We started to approach the theme: memories, narratives; toys and games. As a rescue, they should put together a kind of overlapping album, with drawings, photos, words, collages that would bring us such memories" (researcher). As a result of this technique, came the recognition and respect for the professionals' performance, their sensitivity and creativity in promoting practices of autonomy, self-care, respect, and other values.

At the EMEI, which serves children between the ages of 4 and 5 years and 11 months, from the first approaches, the researchers sought a relaxed conversation about the pedagogical practice developed in the unit. They used written and/or recorded recording techniques with educators and children, analysis of photographs, class diaries, reports, pedagogical projects, documents, and didactic material produced with the children. The team made video recordings to understand the gestures and movements of the participants, in order to capture the meanings of the actions.

As the techniques were unveiling the meanings and codes of the praxis of the context, there was a need to propose that the educators develop reports on their pedagogical experiences, the activities and projects in progress. The reports showed that there was an appropriation of the narrative map technique. The development of this technique with the students was not possible to be completed due to the health crisis caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic, which interrupted the activities at CEU Butantã. In the conversations and practices, we noticed that the construction of the narrative map by the educators allowed them to deepen their awareness of the teaching process and the relationship between students and educators in the appropriation of the architectural complex, with its limits and potentialities.

The EMEF attends children and teenagers from 6 to 14 years old, distributed between elementary I (1st to 4th grades) and elementary II (5th to 9th grades). The process of sensitization and mobilization for joining the research was diversified in order to meet the complexity of elementary school. The school unit has three periods with specialist teachers, and the students in fundamental II study up to 10 subjects. This creates a diversity of pedagogical situations. The workshops took place during pedagogical training time, once a week. The educators brought a series of issues of daily life in the classroom, the sociopolitical context and specificities of the management of the CEU.

As it took shape, the research revealed that the library is a multi- and interdisciplinary space. All school units pass through this space. Sometimes we observe siblings, parents, and neighbors meeting in the library to develop reading, storytelling, research, and other activities. Several projects, such as the water project,

the music project, botany studies, among others, were always supported by the library.

Another existing organism in the CEU is the student council. To understand it, we listened to the two subjects of this process - educator and student. We conducted semi-structured interviews with the educator, in order to understand how the mediation process takes place in this space of socio-political formation of pre-adolescents and adolescents.

With the students of the guild, narrative maps and conversation rounds were developed with the participation of five adolescents. Generally, the conversation wheels tend to have a dialogic and democratic character, thanks to which everyone can speak and present their perceptions. As a qualitative research technique, the conversation wheels facilitated contact and allowed the contradictions and tensions within the wheel to emerge. They propitiated the meeting, the dialogue, the collection of narratives and the sharing among the participants about the process of occupation and appropriation of the architectural and social complex of the CEU Butantã.

The questions from the guild members and the educator affected the teaching process, in terms of didactic issues and the way of accessing knowledge. With regard to the pre-adolescents and adolescents, this process awakened them to enter the path of citizenship and an ethical way of placing themselves, conquering and transforming daily life (cf. LOPES, 2019 and SOUZANETO, 1993).

Finally, the students elaborated a narrative map, drawing the spaces they most "like", enjoy, and use frequently at the CEU, which allowed us to extract some considerations. The EMEF was not mentioned as a pleasant space by the students, except for one teenager who drew the cafeteria. The spaces that appeared most in the drawings were the swimming pools, the theater with SPCine, and the skateboarding track. Such spaces are revealed as places where sociability and affection are present and as constituting the development of subjectivity, objectivity and protagonism of children and adolescents.

The techniques developed had the contribution of the mediating educator, who facilitated the process as a research subject and participant researcher, analyzing her own practice and experience. In this way, we were able to apprehend and interpret the conceptions, actions and dynamics of this school unit, in itself and in its relationship with the CEU.

RESULTS:

After an incursion into the daily life of the CEU Butantã, we can point to some intuitions that may respond to the research objectives.

In the first place, the CEU Butantã is an action of the public power, focused on education in regions of concentration of poor populations, territories where the repercussions of social inequality are manifested with more intensity. Democratic education, which is committed to social issues, tends to have repercussions on the daily life and trajectory of children, teenagers, and their families. Generally, a social facility reconfigures the space where it is located, as an "ecosystem", where groups and collectives relate to each other and to the social environment.

Secondly, at the CEU Butantã, it was possible to perceive a praxis that is reflected in an ethical, creative and committed action on the part of the educators. Despite the social problems, the professionals are dedicated and fulfill their social role. It is this disposition, full of empathy, that interferes in the dynamics, progress, and development of the students.

Third, the research provided the involvement between the participants, especially between the educators of the municipal education network and the researchers from the universities involved. The questions, reflections, and construction of the experience optimized the understanding of the phenomena present in that reality. The research presented itself as a trigger to reflect on the educators' own practices, to value the pedagogical processes as experiences of knowledge construction, feeding the teaching activity and new learning (Scientific/Academic Initiation), and to meet and share knowledge in the face of everyday relationships.

Fourthly, the process of inter-relation between home, school and community provided the students, educators, managers and family members, even if still in a tenuous way, with a new way of placing themselves in the world, of appropriating and creating new opportunities. The participants learned to observe the architectural and social complex of the CEU Butantã as a public thing, for all, and not as a private thing. Somehow, the space and the activities were and are leading the subjects to the construction of subjectivities, to the imagination and to the creation of alternative alternatives, in everyday situations. The pedagogical experience tends to help the subjects to reflect about their life history, their future, and to reallocate their dreams, desires, fantasies, possibilities and impossibilities, to take possession of their individual reality and the awareness of themselves and of others.

Fifth, the experience of the CEU project questions public policies about the need to not run away from their implicit objective, which is the commitment to social issues, the affirmation of rights, the generation of new public spaces, and the pro-

motion of freedom, justice, solidarity, and peace. Finally, to contribute to the creation of tools that drive the construction of a culture based on human coexistence.

Sixth, at the end of this stage of the research, participants and researchers were affected by two guiding axes of humanizing pedagogy, which are appropriation and becoming more aware of justice. This was revealed in dialogues, in conversations, in the activities of preparing the narrative maps, and in moments of tension and conflicts, which permeated the actions of educators in early childhood education (CEI and EMEL), in elementary education (EMEF), and among teachers of the same units. The contradictions allowed us to perceive different aspects about the appropriation itself, the appropriation of space, the educators' perception and the social function of education, among other concepts that permeate the educational practice as a whole.⁶

CONSIDERATIONS:

In our quest to capture the educators' and researchers' perception of the research-action process at the CEU Butantã, specifically with regard to the mode of appropriation of space and the pedagogical project, we tried to understand the dialogical praxis that is established between educator and student, in the face of the assumption of taking into account the discursive elements, intertextuality, playfulness, contextuality, and intersubjectivity, present in the processes of school interaction.

Participant observation proved to be an efficient methodological resource that allowed a good performance of the researchers in the practices and symbolic representations experienced in a closer way to the students and educators. As a social research technique, it opened the field for a better interpretation of the aspects legitimated by the school culture of the professionals of CEU Butantã. The observation of the activities developed in the complex showed that some spaces are notably occupied with school activities, while others have their occupation disputed at different times. It was not possible, however, to affirm that the activities are integrated or evidence a conception of an educating city, stimulated from the management of the educational unit.

We observed an educational process rich in fragments, in a humanizing pedagogy, but fragile to some extent, due to the absence of a more organic project that facilitates communication, dialog, and interaction among all sectors. The complex was conceived as an organic unit of intercommunication between the school and cultural units and the community. Perhaps this is due to insufficient staff and staff qualification for this service.

This situation is aggravated by a certain lack of maintenance of the cultural equipment and by the excess of railings that ended up altering the original architectural project. This fact fragments the coexistence and appropriation of the space as a whole and distances children, teenagers, young people, adults, and the community. Each group has to conquer the places in the architectural complex as their social spaces and experience specific possibilities, with the mediation of teachers and educators about the uses and appropriations that materialize in the daily activities and from the peer culture that is designed in this daily life.

The CEU is the architectural and social space that brings together communities on the margins of the material and symbolic goods produced by the city. It goes beyond the mere conception of a bureaucratic school pedagogy and transforms it into a humanizing and living pedagogy, in dialogue with multiple situations and knowledge. It motivates, impels, and provokes the school, the community, the population, and the social equipment to fight for a more humanizing and integral territory, and for a human rights policy.

Among some limits that we observed, there was the feeling that the relationship between the architectural complex of the CEU Butantã has not yet come to constitute a culture, in which an almost natural flow of the social network of the territory and the school would be established. School and community should both recreate themselves simultaneously.

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FOOTNOTE:

1. This text is a by-product of the Project "Dealing with new spaces: children and adolescents in the appropriation of the CEU Butantã architectural complex (São Paulo, Brazil)", which started in 2018, financed by Mackpesquisa.
2. Free translation from the authors.
3. Free translation from the authors.

4. Free translation from the authors.

5. Free translation from the authors.

6. This survey is not yet complete. More information can be found in the General Research Report, which is typed, or in different articles already published on it. To see Revista RoSE Vol 11, No 2 (2020) (rosejournal.com)